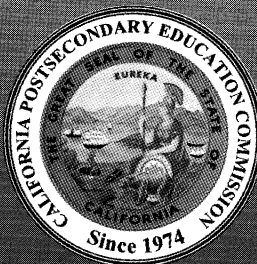


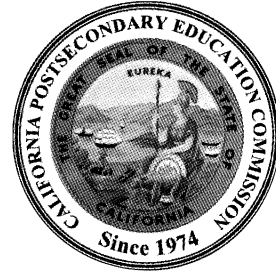
California and Mexico: The Realities and Possibilities For Higher Education



A Policy Discussion
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November 2001



The Role of the Commission

In a world of increasing complexity where the interrelation of important social and economic issues cuts across traditional boundaries, policy makers now require an expanding network of resources to provide information, analysis and advice to resolve these issues. As an independent, non-partisan citizen board, the California Postsecondary Education Commission is one of those resources for the California Legislature, the Governor's Office and others. The Commission also has an important role in advancing public dialogue about the needs of the people, the needs of the State and the issues that affect the ability of the State's postsecondary education enterprise to meet those needs.

In the narrowest sense, the Commission focuses on higher education and the state's colleges and universities. But we are constantly aware of the broad interplay of issues and challenges that face California. For example, many Californians have no access to affordable health care — or in some isolated rural areas, to any health care at all. Additionally, some sectors of the state struggle for economic survival, even in the midst of plenty for California as a whole. In more dire times, such as periods like the State's current economic downturn, these areas suffer further.

Both examples — limited healthcare access and struggling local economies — are issues that, without being tied directly to education, nevertheless have strong implications for postsecondary institutions and the policies that govern them. First, higher education institutions can foster the research that helps us understand the issues. Second, they then can help incubate the knowledge and talent to address them. And, finally, colleges and universities can drive solutions by their very presence and activities in their respective communities that serve to focus resources where they are needed most.

Within this context, the California Postsecondary Education Commission conducted a two-day hearing in October 2001 designed to explore issues that are particular to the California-Mexico border area. With the support of funding from the California Endowment, the Commission visited Calexico and Mexicali to learn first hand about an area of California that is rich in potential.

This monograph reflects the testimony heard both in California and in Mexico and serves as a starting point for a more pro-active effort to use higher education policy to address a broad range of needs in California's southern border area. It is also one of a series of reports the Commission will continue to issue as it works to create wider understanding of and support for higher education and its role in promoting the economic development of the state and enhancing the lives of its citizens.

Warren H. Fox, Ph.D.
Executive Director

November 2001

To: The Governor, the Legislature and interested parties
From: The California Postsecondary Education Commission
Subject: California and Mexico: The Realities and Possibilities for Higher Education

When the California Postsecondary Education Commission first began discussing the concept of a cross-border hearing, the rationale was very clear. California's changing demographics have made it one of only three states that have no single ethnic group as a majority (Hawaii and New Mexico are the other two). We are leaders in population diversity, and as such are heavily immersed in the cross-cultural challenges that are pervasive throughout the state and magnified at the boundary that joins California and Mexico.

That was the context as we put together what we believed would be an invaluable hearing to enhance understanding, further dialogue and generate fresh ideas. Then, the horrific events of September 11th happened – and our world changed overnight.

As this is being written and distributed, the outcome of our response to September 11 is still unfolding. We are at war with terrorism, and the security of our way of life has been shaken. In some corners, there has been the unsurprising, reflexive cry to throw out the foreigners, close the doors and adopt isolation as our defense. But far more widespread has been the healthy recognition that we are a global society and that the future depends on our continuing to welcome others into our circle.

Now more than ever, it is important to open the doors of our institutions of higher education and allow people from other nations and cultures to learn about the United States first hand – our accomplishments, our failures, our strengths, our flaws. The vast majority of those who pass through our colleges and universities do not return to their homelands as anti-U.S. fanatics but as productive, world-aware citizens who put their knowledge to use to spread health and prosperity. And that is the prescription for a safer, better world for all of us.

In our two days of hearings, the importance of cross-border cooperation became evident. We learned that some links are in place and some connections are already being made. But so much more can be done, to the advantage of both sides of the border. The following monograph shares what we learned with California policy makers and suggests areas for further exploration.

The Commission wishes to express its gratitude to the many educators and education advocates who took the time to provide information and offer their perspectives during our hearings. In particular, we are grateful to San Diego State University's Imperial Valley Campus in Calexico for hosting the first day of the hearing and to the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California for welcoming us on the second day. And we appreciate the financial support from the California Endowment that allowed us to bring this important forum together. It is our hope and expectation that the dialogue started in our meeting will continue and grow as we seek ways to strengthen the role of higher education in addressing the needs of California and Mexico.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan Arkatov". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" and last name "Arkatov" clearly distinguishable.

Alan S. Arkatov
Chair, California Postsecondary Education Commission

Introduction

California as it is often depicted in modern myth is a state with teeming cities, an immense population and a thriving economy, all connected by roadways and airways that bring the state's size into manageable proportions. But California as it actually exists is something different, more complex and far less idealized. To be sure, California has regions of population, development and prosperity that fit the myth, but more than half of the state's counties are sparsely settled and have rural economies that strain to survive even in the best of times. The most northern portion of the state and parts of its central valley and eastern regions are examples. But nowhere is this "other California" more evident than in the farthest southeastern stretches of the state. There, where Imperial County sprawls along the California-Mexico border, its scattering of small communities are far off the beaten path of most travelers and business expansion.

The statistics tell how different this portion of the state is. Imperial County's largest city and county seat, El Centro, has fewer than 40,000 people. The ethnicity is heavily Hispanic; the county has twice as many Hispanics as the state average and only half as many whites. More than 40 percent of households have either low or very low income. The majority of jobs are in government, agricultural services or farm production, in contrast with the rest of the state where services and retail trade are the largest employers. The average unemployment rate for Imperial County has rarely dipped below 25 percent in the past decade, even when the state's figure dropped to less than 5 percent. Imperial County's population lags behind the state average on every measure of education; the rate for those with less than a 9th grade education is almost three times the state average of 10 percent.

Despite these bleak statistics, the county is home to a pro-active education community. From an activist local school district in the small town of Calexico and a growing community college in Imperial to outposts for both the University of California system in Holtville and San Diego State University in Calexico, there is a concerted effort on the part of many in the area to expand the educational opportunity available in that region.

A short distance across the border is Mexicali, a bustling city in Mexico that numbers its population in the hundreds of thousands. Here the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California faces challenges often similar to those of its higher education counterparts across the border in Imperial County and ones that sound all too familiar to educators throughout California.

In these two very different cities, the California Postsecondary Education Commission set out to examine border issues. Although generally focused on the planning and coordination of postsecondary education in California, the Commission designed this special hearing with the following specific goals:

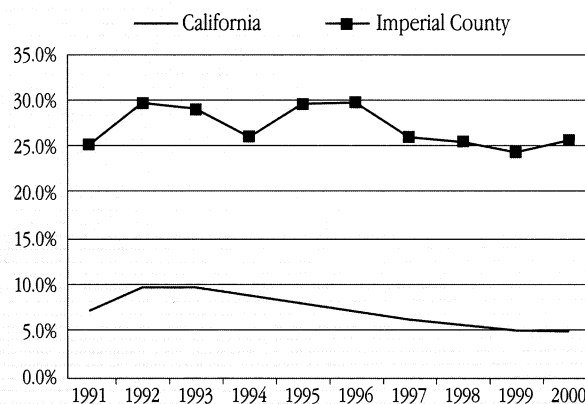
- Examining the role of college and university off-campus centers in the educational opportunities available to residents of underserved areas.
- Raising awareness of bi-national and border issues having potential public policy and educational implications.
- Identifying specific outreach and collaborative efforts — existing and potential — that address regional issues, including educational opportunity, health care and socio-economic advancement.

The following report summarizes presentations made by participants on both sides of the border:

- In California, these included Khosrow Fatemi, Dean of the Imperial Valley Campus of San Diego State University; Refugio Gonzalez, County Director for the UC Cooperative Extension in Imperial County; Roberto Moreno, Superintendent of Calexico Unified School District; and Gilbert Dominguez, Superintendent and President of the Imperial Valley College.
- In Mexico, participants included Victor Beltrán, Rector of the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California; Roberto de Jesús Verdugo, Undersecretary of Public Education for Baja California; Enrique Blancas, Rector of CETYS, a private university in Mexicali; Reyna Brito, professor at Tecnológico de Mexicali, another private university; and Eugenio Cetina-Vadillo, Director General of Higher Education for the federal government.

The report summarizes background information on Mexico provided during the hearing by Francisco Marmolejo, Executive Director of the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration.

**Average Annual Unemployment Rate
1991-2000**



Source — Civilian Unemployment Rates:
EDD Labor Market Information Division, October 1, 2001

California

Imperial Valley Campus Dean Khosrow Fatemi

As part of San Diego State University, the Imperial Valley Campus in Calexico serves almost 900 students, with most taking upper division liberal studies courses that can lead to a teaching career. Dean Khosrow Fatemi talked about the desperate need for a larger investment in higher education that would provide more opportunities and options.

Imperial County has a young population, with almost 42 percent under the age of 25. It is also a county that is undergoing rapid population growth. During the 1990s, California as a whole averaged 13.8 percent growth while Imperial County saw the population surge more than 30 percent.

This fast growth has not been accompanied by increasing economic opportunity. In every case where an economic indicator is a positive factor, Imperial County rates at about half or less of the state average. In every case where an indicator is negative, Imperial County's statistics are twice as bad as the state average, or more. For instance, Imperial County is the poorest county in the state. The median household income in California is almost \$40,000, compared to \$23,000 in Imperial County. The county isn't just at the bottom — it is by far the poorest, with the next four poorest counties having median incomes at least \$5,000 a year higher. More than 30 percent of the population lives in poverty, almost twice the state average of 16 percent.

Lack of College-Ready Students

Q. The lack of college-ready students indicates to me that the problem is in K-12 preparation so that students are ready and able to move into higher education. Isn't that where the failure is?

A. From my perspective, I don't think the high schools are doing a poor job. For instance, the dropout rate here is about the same as the statewide average. And 20 percent are college-eligible. That's a low number, but I'm more concerned that of that only 8 percent go because the other 12 percent simply don't see or have the opportunity. It's lack of access and lack of motivation. It's because these students don't see the future. These are primarily first-generation college students. There's no Uncle Joe to encourage them to take calculus. That role model doesn't exist. That student has to be self-motivated, and when they look and don't see college access here, then they don't have any motivation to take those college prep courses.

Imperial County has an agriculturally based economy with 23 percent involved in farming, compared to 3.1 percent statewide. But the area's poverty cannot be blamed on the fact that this is an agriculturally based economy. While it is generally true that farming is less affluent than other economic sectors, in 1975 Imperial Valley's per capita income was 85 percent of the state average. Today it has dropped to 58.8 percent, and the county is not any more dependent on agriculture than it was 25 years ago.

Impact of North American Fair Trade Agreement (NAFTA)

Q. Has NAFTA had any impact in Imperial County?

A. The economy of the Imperial Valley is very much dependent on the economy of Mexico. Every day, 100,000 people cross in each direction, some to shop, some to work. In other states, like Texas, the impact of NAFTA between the U.S. and Mexico was immediate. But here, we have seen little impact. It comes back to what investors look for. If I want to invest in border areas because of trade possibilities with Mexico, I will look at different counties along the border. I need technical engineers, people who are good with computers, and many others. If they are not available in one county, I will just go somewhere else. We have different activities and different organizations within the county that are working on attracting investors but the basic problem remains that we don't have the trained and educated workforce that businesses look for.

The economic status of Imperial County is directly linked to the education problem. It is helpful to examine some statistics: Statewide, 36 percent of high school graduates are eligible to go to a state university while in Imperial County the rate is only 20 percent. Statewide, 17.6 percent of high school graduates attend a state university or University of California campus; for Imperial Valley the rate is only 8 percent. Finally, statewide only 23.8 percent of the population that is 25 and older has less education than a high school diploma. In Imperial County, that percentage is 46.8 percent. Fewer than 10 percent of Imperial Valley residents have a college degree, while statewide the rate is 23.1 percent. Since level of education is directly linked to income, these statistics do much to explain why poverty is high and incomes are low in Imperial County.

Which Comes First?

Q. Isn't this a "chicken or egg" dilemma? Which should come first – the jobs that require a high level of education or the people who are educated to perform high-level jobs?

A. This is not a Catch 22. The state has to show leadership and provide educational opportunities. Investors are not going to come here if they have to bring their work force from outside the region. We have to provide the education and then when investors come, they will see that we are ready for them.

The cause of the problem is evident when the per capita expenditure on higher education is examined: statewide it is \$178.60 but in Imperial County, it is \$28.60. It may be argued that there are counties in this state where no money is spent on higher education. However, there are only two counties with populations greater than 100,000 that do not have a university within their borders or within a 40-mile commute. They are Shasta County, where students are about 70 miles from the state university at Chico, and Imperial County, which is 120 miles from the universities in San Diego. It is no coincidence that these two are the only counties that send fewer than 10 percent of their high school graduates to a state university or the University of California.

In that context, one can better understand the development of the San Diego State University, the Imperial Valley Campus in Calexico. The current number of 885 students is expected to double by 2010. Undergraduates make up about 60 percent of the total, and the students are about evenly divided between part-time and full-time status. More than 75 percent are on track to become teachers, largely because that is the curriculum offered. Other curriculum is very limited and there are no health or science majors available. However, a business administration major, with an emphasis in agribusiness, was added recently.

The lack of a varied curriculum means that Imperial County does not produce the educated workers necessary to attract outside investors. The economy will not improve if it continues to be mired in minimum wage jobs. More and better jobs will not materialize without investors and the investors are not going to come to the region if they have to bring in workers from outside. These circumstances can be improved if resources can be employed to raise the college-bound high school graduates to the state average. As the educational and employment opportunities increase, more businesses will come in and the area's economy will improve.

San Diego State University, Imperial Valley Campus in Calexico must add more majors and more capacity. The campus has a capacity limit of 450 full-time equivalent students and it is at 600 full-time

equivalent students. In examining the campus budget, it is clear that an incremental increase of 10 or even 20 percent is not going to solve the problem. A fundamental change is needed. California must examine its priorities and decide whether or not it can afford to have a portion of its population living under these conditions. Resolving the issues associated with education is the key to improving these circumstances. If they go unresolved, the situation will worsen.

University of California Cooperative Extension, Director Refugio A. Gonzalez

The Cooperative Extension is a body within the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Division that provides education, outreach, applied research and public service in every county in the state.

The University of California Cooperative Extension is a unique organization that is recognized around the world as a model worth replicating. It is part of the University's Agriculture and Natural Resources Division, which has three main missions: conducting research at three agriculture experimental stations, conserving land through nature preserves and extending research and the results of that research to literally every community in California. The Cooperative Extension is a large part of the University's overall outreach efforts, accounting for about 90 percent of such undertakings.

4-H Tie to College Preparation

Q. Do you see an opportunity to use the 4-H program to pinpoint students who could become eligible for college and encourage them in that direction?

A. We could work with San Diego State University on that. The kids could come in and be mentored by existing college students so they could understand the opportunities and the possibilities. The challenge now is that a lot of kids know 4-H is there but they don't think it has anything to offer them. We're working with the Imperial County Housing Authority to set up programs that use teachers who are out of school for the summer to provide activities for the kids. If we get these kids during the summer, we can keep them in the structure during the school year and then make some progress.

As in other counties, UC Cooperative Extension is run in Imperial County under a memorandum of understanding with the county government. Costs are covered by university, federal and county funding, as well as private donations and grants.

Agriculture is the top industry in Imperial County, with \$1 billion in gross receipts. To put that in perspective, California is the nation's number one agricultural state with almost \$27 billion, using 1997 figures. Texas is next at \$15.9 billion, followed by Iowa with \$13.6 billion. In California, the top 10 agricultural counties are led by Fresno County with \$3.3 billion and Tulare County close behind at \$3 billion. Imperial County brings up the bottom of the top 10 – but even so is the 12th largest agricultural county in the United States by market value of agricultural products sold in 1997. So agriculture is very big in Imperial County and there is plenty of work throughout the year to keep the Cooperative Extension programs busy.

Often there is confusion between the Cooperative Extension and UC extension classes, where each University department conducts self-funded classes for communities that surround the campuses. The Cooperative Extension is quite different, with activities that include providing field consultations and office consultations. The program conducts research in collaboration with others, organizes conferences and seminars, and distributes literature. In addition, Cooperative Extension oversees 4-H, which has more than 1,400 members and 400 adult volunteers in Imperial County.

Cross-Border Ties

Q. Your relationship with Universidad Autonoma de Baja California seems strong. How can we leverage and grow the successes you are having there and within Imperial County?

A. We need to continue to look at ways to work across the border. Just because a border is there doesn't mean that our efforts should stop at that line. The infrastructure that is needed and that we are moving forward with cannot simply quit at the border because the problems don't stop there and the impact extends beyond it. In Imperial County, we are working to attract processing plants to the county so that more of the agricultural dollars remain here. We have a cheese processing plant and we are trying to get the dairy industry back here. We need to keep showing people what can work and what can be done.

The topics addressed and areas of concern include agricultural economics, farm personnel management, farm marketing, irrigation/water management, soils evaluation, livestock, aquaculture, poultry, biomass energy production, vegetable crops, firewood sources, entomology, apiculture, vertebrate pests, plant pathology and nematology. Cooperative Extension provides services related to food safety, nutrition, and family and consumer science. And through 4-H,

the program addresses youth development, as well as college and career counseling.

One example of a collaborative project underway is the extension of the California Irrigation Management Information System to Baja California to improve irrigation efficiency. The Cooperative Extension is working with graduate students from the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California to put a weather station in Mexicali Valley. By carefully tracking weather patterns, this project will alert growers when temperatures have reached a threshold that requires irrigation.

Another project involves the Clean Water Act and the total maximum daily load (TMDL) of contaminants that water can carry and still meet the act's standards. Cooperative Extension is doing research funded by the federal Environmental Protection Agency, state water agencies and colleagues from the university in Mexicali. This is an important issue for Imperial County, but one that also has national and international implications.

A big and growing part of the program's services is to work with the county's social services programs to provide food safety and nutrition information to people involved in welfare-to-work efforts. Cooperative Extension also works with about 60 different organizations locally to get information out about nutrition and consumer science.

What sets UC Cooperative Extension apart is its can-do attitude and commitment to being an honest broker. Cooperative Extension lives and dies by its research, so it sticks to the straight story no matter what the impact is. That means people can trust the program. It is the orientation of the program to always solve the problem, and it has change leaders and problem solvers, not simply observers or information takers. When Cooperative Extension sees a situation, it looks for an answer.

Calexico Unified School District Superintendent Roberto Moreno

Calexico Unified School District is the largest K-12 district in Imperial County with 8,000 students, growing at about 5 percent per year. Moreno is a graduate of the system and he became superintendent 10 years ago.

The traditional notion of a border is something that divides and separates. However, in this instance the border actually brings people together. The only reason for Calexico to exist or Mexicali to exist is the border. It facilitates the exchange of people, ideas, culture and economic goods. The border is what brings us together, not what divides us. For many, Calexico is a modern Ellis Island. People may come here from Mexico, reside a short time and then move on to other parts of the United States.

A Role in Teacher English Skills

Q. What assistance from higher education are you looking for to address your teacher shortage?

A. San Diego State University needs to continue to expand the pool of available courses at the Imperial Valley Campus. Math, science – there are no offerings to support majors in those areas, yet there is an extreme shortage of these kinds of teachers, as well as in special education. We have hired teachers from Mexicali, but it is difficult for them to pass the English requirements in the time frame they are given so after a year or two they have to return to Mexicali. I think the state university and University of California systems could play a role in helping professionals get up to par with their English skills and transition the other skills they have so they would be eligible for professional jobs here.

So, despite the bleak statistics heard earlier about the poverty rates and lack of education, Calexico is a symbol. It should not be romanticized, but there is a positive side to those statistics. They don't reflect a poverty full of destitution or of despair, but a poverty with hope. Parents are often dropouts, but they know their children are going to do better. They are working their way up.

We can look at the statistics very negatively. They capture a truth, but they miss other things. For instance, in the '70s the number of Latinos at Stanford from Calexico were outnumbered only by those from El Paso and Los Angeles. In the '80s the University of California conducted a study and listed the top 50 high schools that sent the most students to UC even though they were more than 100 miles from a UC campus. Calexico was on that list.

So a close look at the numbers reveals success stories and reasons for optimism. Nevertheless, there are two issues of particular concern for Imperial Valley students in the 9th through 12th grades: They are accessibility to higher education and preparation for enrollment success at the college and university level.

Accessibility is an issue. It is very difficult for students to leave home, both economically and culturally. Economically, it is much more expensive for students to go to college today than it was 30 years ago. When I went to college, you could work 40 hours a week during the summer at minimum wage and save about two-thirds of the cost for

an academic year. Today, a student would have to earn \$9 an hour to save 60 percent of what attending a UC campus costs. Students simply don't have that opportunity.

Academic preparation is also an issue. While a good job is done of prepping students in the area, away from school much of life is conducted in Spanish – in student's homes, area businesses, and family's churches. Student exposure to English is in schools. That's a challenge for students, particularly when it comes to meeting university requirements.

There is a need to combine the resources that are in place in Imperial County if there is a serious interest in having students better prepared. Need exists for a stronger coordinated effort to reach students in the 9th, 10th and 11th grade. What is missing right now is coordination and communication between higher education and the school district. It is known that campuses work with parents and provide tutoring, but it is not known which parents or students they are working with. A coordinated approach would lead to program accountability measures and better feedback for improving such efforts.

The Imperial County Office of Education is working with the UC system on strategies for reaching students in rural areas, but the community college and the State University system need to be involved as well. The objective is seamless operation on multiple educational levels. Parents relate to the high school and think that higher education is all part of the same system. More effort needs to be made to work as though that is true.

There is a large migrant population in Imperial County and that factor used to contribute to educational problems. But migrant parents are becoming more school-wise and are relatively sophisticated about the need to stay in one place and keep children in school from the first day of school to the last day. So students are beginning to have a more stable continuum of schooling.

In one way, it is fortunate that the higher education opportunities in the Imperial Valley are focused on teaching because there is always difficulty attracting enough qualified teachers. While that benefits the local area, it is in the students' best interest that educational opportunities here be expanded so students may pursue careers where their hearts are. Other kinds of opportunities are needed and ways need to be found to open those opportunities for them.

Imperial Valley College, Superintendent/ President Gilbert M. Dominguez

Imperial Valley College serves 7,000 students. Almost 3,000 students per semester participate in the community college's English as a Second Language program.

Imperial County has developed many educational partnerships, ideas and models that have been fruitful. These include:

- The San Diego/Imperial County Community Colleges Association, which is a consortium of nine community colleges in the two counties that has worked together for more than 20 years.
- The San Diego State University Liaison, which has brought Imperial Valley College, San Diego State University and the Imperial Valley Campus together for 16 years.
- A memorandum of understanding between the community college districts in the two counties that provides the Borderlands Workforce Development Projects.
- The International Consortium for Education and Economic Development, an exchange program with 50 members including institutions in Canada, the United States and Mexico.
- A variety of programs that support students who are in the early stages of teacher training or who come to college from educationally or economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Imperial Valley College also trains nurses for El Centro Regional and Pioneers hospitals with the help of a state grant. The college is also a party to a joint powers agreement that is establishing fiber optic connections for the school districts and other Imperial County public agencies. In addition, the college is a member of the Imperial County Workforce Investment Board.

Impact of Cut in Outreach Funding

Q. What was your plan for the outreach funding that was cut from the state budget?

A. The allocation would have been about \$198,000 for us, based on our enrollment. We already have an excellent working relationship with every high school. We go to each to provide information about financial aid, to help assess student readiness and to perform academic counseling. This money would have allowed us to put a person full time at each site to work in conjunction with the high school counselors, who have very high student ratios. If someone were there all the time to promote higher education and to support the counselors, it would help tremendously.

Imperial Valley College's curriculum and special programs reflect the population it serves. The largest portion of the enrollment is Hispanic, almost 84 percent. More than 70 percent are first-generation college students. And Spanish is the primary language for a very high percentage of the students. So the Imperial Valley College campus does a lot of work on basic skill preparation, English, and English as a Second Language to prepare these students for transfer to other colleges and universities.

Many of the campus's issues and opportunities relate to its proximity to the border, while others deal with resources. These include:

- Language barriers. Thirty-seven percent of Imperial Valley College's first-entry students are enrolled in Basic English, and 92 percent of those who took English are in Basic English and English as a Second Language.
- Demand for bilingual programs. The campus must be able to provide more opportunities in child development, auto technology and other subjects. These vocational education programs give students an opportunity to improve their lives.
- Access to technology. Outside of the classroom, it is not known how many students have access to computers but it is not thought to be a large number.
- Changes in outreach funding. The state budget cut \$11 million in outreach funding, which impacts the ability of community colleges to reach students in high school and encourage them to seek higher education opportunities.

On an annual basis, most of the 400 or so students who continue their education after community college go to the Imperial Valley Campus. Although students are given the opportunity to visit other campuses where there are more choices and a broader array of degree offerings, most remain close to home (297 last year), whether because of cultural or economic factors.

Imperial Valley College has been very active in economic development. In its nursing program, hospitals are paying for their employees to be faculty members on the campus. Another program helps certified nurse assistants become licensed vocational nurses. Imperial Valley College is working on programs such as heating and air conditioning training because indoor air quality is such a concern in the Imperial Valley and these types of jobs are needed.

Despite the challenges, Imperial Valley College is always in the forefront of trying to offer the services that are needed and working with others to help students be successful.

Mexico

Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC) Executive Director Francisco Marmolejo

CONAHEC is a tri-national consortium that joins Canada, the United States and Mexico to work on collaboration, cooperation and community building among the higher education institutions of North America. Its goals include acting as an information, liaison, research and promotional center for academic cooperation in North America and providing a forum for discussion, analysis and promotion of educational policies on academic cooperation and professional mobility in North America.

To begin to understand border issues between California and Mexico, it is important to start with the big picture and place what is happening in a larger context in the region. For example, the effects of globalization involve many social net gains – but there are problems that are emerging as well. Globalization has meant a shift in productive infrastructure, with some areas losing jobs, companies and professions and other areas gaining them. There is an “exclusion” effect, with large segments of population completely out of the picture when it comes to gains. And there is an increasing gap between the haves and have-nots, or the knows and know-nots.

Comparative educational levels per 100,000 population

<i>Educational Level Rate</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<i>USA</i>	<i>Canada</i>
4-23 years	63	87	84
Preschool	61	83	60
Elementary	117	100	105
High School	53	98	105
Higher Education	14	63	67
Higher Ed. Enrollment	1,543	5,438	5,025

It is useful to look at the asymmetries between developed and developing countries generally and the United States and Mexico specifically. Developed countries have stable population sizes, while developing countries are seeing the effects of fast growth. Mexico has an annual growth rate of 2.1 percent compared to .9 percent in the United States. And in Mexico almost 37 percent of the population is under 15 years old, compared to only 21.9 percent in the United States. The Gross National Product for the United States exceeds \$6 trillion dollars, while Mexico's is counted in billions. Enrollment in higher education is almost 5,500 per 100,000 population in the United States and only 1,500 in Mexico. In Mexico, 60 percent of the population is poor by United Nations' standards and 20 million live in extreme poverty.

Add to these contrasts some “trivia” about the border between Mexico and the United States: With more than 2,000 miles, it is the longest border in the world between a developing and developed country. More than 600 million people cross in either direction annually. More than 1,600 maquiladora plants employ more than 500,000 people. And by the year 2010, Hispanics will represent 53 percent of the population in the United States.

What this tells us is that what happens in Mexico matters to the United States, and what happens in the United States has a major impact on life in Mexico. There is a great deal of interdependence between Mexico and the United States – and because there is, there is a great interest in Mexico succeeding. If they are to succeed, they need more and better education, and there is great opportunity in this factor. At the same time, there are many tensions that arise from different perceptions of history and issues such as drugs, illegal immigration, the environment and economic development.

It is important to consider context, such as the fact that there is a new government in Mexico with an ambitious agenda:

- Fostering a new economic miracle.
- Development and progress for all.
- Living in peace, with justice and safety.
- A good government.
- More resources for development.

In implementing this agenda, the new government faces the challenge of meeting the high expectations of a public that has waited long for genuine reform and accomplishing a great deal with limited resources in a time of recession.

Another important contextual factor is the difference between higher education in the United States and Mexico. In Mexico, education is a federal responsibility, not a state or local one. Higher education is much more rigid; it determines what students need based on the goal of serving the social good. Also, higher education is very much focused on professions, in contrast to the liberal arts/general education orientation of higher education in the United States.

The universities themselves are different in the two countries. In Mexico, university presidents are elected, with one-third of the votes from faculty, one-third from students and one-third from deans. Only 5 percent of professors have doctorates, and 70 percent of the faculty teach only part time. Despite their differences, many of the issues that face universities in both countries are the same: access for students, financing, autonomy vs. accountability, and quality.

One more piece of data is important to keep in mind: In California, international education is a huge component of the economic support for higher education. On an annual basis, 66,000 students

come to California from other countries, providing \$1.6 billion. But out of the two million higher education students from California, only 9,925 are studying abroad. Enough may not be being done to really prepare California students to be global citizens.

The following are some areas of opportunity:

- Faculty development programs.
- Language/cultural competencies.
- Corporate training.
- Alternative non-traditional education.
- K-12.
- Technical assistance in development of in-house infrastructure, expertise and programs.

Partnering with Mexico offers valuable opportunities for both countries. The key is to match potential partners, recognize and respect cultural differences, and identify and utilize support organizations.

Policy Forum at Universidad Autonoma de Baja California, Mexicali

On its second day of hearings, the California Postsecondary Education Commission was hosted by the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California for a brief policy forum, a keynote address by a top federal education official and a tour of the campus. In addition, CPEC witnessed a signing ceremony for a continuing memorandum of understanding that supports joint programs and academic exchanges between San Diego State University and Universidad Autonoma de Baja California. The following briefly highlights the key points of speakers participating in the forum.

California Postsecondary Education Commission Alan Arkatov, Chair

In the coming years in California, it is expected that there will be significant growth in higher education enrollment – and growth is expected in Mexico as well. The challenge is to work together to create the right programs to benefit the students, the economy and the social progress in both countries.

It is this challenge that brings together officials from both California and Mexico in what is expected to be a fruitful forum. The California Postsecondary Education Commission is pleased to join with colleagues from Mexico to collaborate in building bridges, making connections and bringing about international understanding on the matters that are of utmost importance to students today and in

coming generations. California and Mexico need to work together to facilitate educational exchanges, address other border issues that impact postsecondary education, and illuminate the important role that higher education plays in the economic and social development of the two countries.

What has become clear in the aftermath of the tragic events on September 11th is that this has become, more than ever, an interconnected world and that education will have to carry the day. Only through international cooperation can the partnerships be built that are necessary for the future.

Universidad Autonoma de Baja California Victor Beltrán, Rector

The Universidad Autonoma de Baja California has established a strategy of internationalization. This international dimension of the university is embraced with the expectation that student mobility will bring new ways of learning and scientific, technological and cultural development among countries. Scientific cooperation at the international level allows us to strengthen research, both enriching the work and making it easier. Cultural exchanges, through television, radio and other means, further our internationalization efforts.

The campus collaboration and outreach includes agreements with Sweden, France, Spain, England, Cuba, Nicaragua and Chile. In the United States, the university has promoted opportunities specifically with California institutions, but it has not covered the diversity, the scope and the impact that should be reached in this region. Student mobility and exchange, human resource development and joint research are only some of the examples of the success internationalization has brought.

The California-Mexico border is very dynamic. Reciprocal influences and contact occur daily. Close contact means the border is another country compared to both the nations to which it belongs. This provides the border dweller a great deal of hope without betraying his origins. The array of scope saves him from being isolated and narrow in perception. The world does not end in Mexicali or Calexico. From this, the border dweller turns into a world citizen. Despite September 11, globalization must not be stopped because it is a type of understanding that puts the world on a more solid basis. A profound “no” must be the answer to any isolated action that makes decisions without taking globalization into account.

California has a great image as a dynamic entity, progressive, open to all ideas. I can think of many bi-national projects that will stimulate both sides. It is in our interest to have your support in these types of projects and to continue to have cooperation between our institutions.

Baja California State Government

Roberto de Jesús Verdugo, Undersecretary of Public Education

At the higher education level, the main challenge in Baja California is to provide this service to the public in general – to the people who are the ideal age to receive the service. It needs to be done in a way that will allow us to form these citizens so that they can obtain social welfare, personal well being and contribute to the development of the state. The state has made great efforts to try to reach these goals within the budget allotted. Almost 77 percent of our state budget is directed toward education. Education is very important to us.

Despite building six classrooms per week, we cannot keep up with growth. We are still searching for the answer to this demand. The challenge of covering this need is increased and complicated if we take into account that this service should be an opportunity for everyone. It is made more difficult because we have to take into account the quality of education. In this state, we have a public university – Universidad Autonoma de Baja California – that is very strong and a leader, but there are other institutions, more than 20, most of them private. Very few of them comply with our social commitment to provide education to as many students as possible. We find strong differences when they are compared among themselves. Few of these institutions have graduate students, and none have research projects.

All of this makes us say that even though we know there exists a need, if we just look at the numbers the majority of universities do not comply with our vision. They don't have the capacity or the resources. So we first have to determine how to provide service to students. But we also have to be aware and develop activities that will allow us to reach the goals of internationalization.

Very little has been done by the state so far in regard to globalization of higher education. One reason is that we have priorities, like coverage and elevating our internal efficiency, that we have to comply with. We have had some exchange programs, some seminars with San Bernardino, Riverside and San Diego Counties, as well as Arizona and Texas, that have yielded good results. Several scholarship programs are in their initial stages. Most of these efforts have been through the universities themselves and not the government. The challenge will be left to the next administration.

We must turn these weaknesses into opportunities to improve our education services in our state. In the universities, both public and private, we find some resistance to change. But I believe with a joint effort, we can improve higher education. We should always turn to the ones closest to us first, and turning to California is where we think we should create these programs. We need to stimulate our institutions to create more opportunities and cooperative efforts like the forum today.

California Postsecondary Education Commission

Warren Fox, Executive Director

The California Postsecondary Education Commission takes a serious interest in the future of higher education in our own state and in this region. As a planning and advisory body, our task is to look ahead at statewide needs. So we welcome this chance to discuss future opportunities with you.

Because of the student growth in primary and secondary schools, in California we see significant growth in higher education enrollment in the coming years. Our Commission projects that the two million students in higher education today will grow to 2.7 million students by the year 2010. Our challenge is to provide access to this large number of students.

One of the areas we may need to address is access for international students. The border is an international boundary that is crossed daily for business, economic activities and education. We need new strategies to provide needed programming to those on both sides of the border. There may be specific programs in public health, public administration, water management and agriculture that need to be initiated or expanded. If we concentrate on infrastructure and workforce preparation, we can help provide better the lives of people in both countries.

Our Commission has taken the time to study how higher education services might be improved in the Imperial Valley, where they are building many partnerships to achieve success. In the future, we want to have more programs and options for students. We look forward to working with you on these important goals. The next generation of students deserves no less.

CETYS

Enrique Blancas, Rector

CETYS, which turns 40 this year, is a private school operated by a non-profit organization that is subsidized by 85 businesses. CETYS is oriented toward the sciences, economic sciences, psychology and law. It has been a very tough 40 years, living solely from resources without having external subsidies. We are attaining levels of excellence and we are proud to be able to comply with the mission of providing higher education. Our greatest strength and achievement is the 16,000 students that have graduated.

Our academic program was redesigned in 2000 to contemplate the need for at least one semester in undergraduate studies that would be done at an institution with which we have an agreement. Examples would be San Diego State University, Arizona, and the universities at

San Bernardino, San Marcos, Pomona and Sonoma. We are trying to create an international program in all of the major areas of the university. Today we have 97 students in Canada and Europe.

We have to provide a focus of globalization and sharing information with these different institutions, culturally, socially and economically. What happens on one side of the border directly impacts the other. As we keep going into the future, we are more and more aware of these ties. We have to search for opportunities, for ties that bind – and those differences that we have can be turned into opportunities to enhance cooperation. In order to solve great differences, we must start with small solutions and go slowly. The Commission faces a great challenge in searching for how joint projects will help us reach our goals.

We are completely willing to participate in these cooperative agreements and joint projects, not only to offer educational services but to find some issues that we may present to the Commission – issues that we have dealt with at San Diego State University and the Imperial Valley Campus, issues that will not overwhelm us but challenges and solutions that will place us on the forefront of international cooperation.

Tecnológico de Mexicali **Reyna Brito, professor**

We are a small school celebrating our 20th anniversary, a part of the public institutions operated by the federal government. With regard to international education, we believe that technology allows communication between people of the world who have different views and objectives. The challenge is to see the different cultural and educational visions. We need to take into account these values and differences between cultures.

Mexico is a multi-cultural country. One of the ongoing debates is what national, state or local community does a person identify with. Current educational policy forces students to turn their eyes toward the progress of industrialized states and forces them to be less aware of what is going on around them. We're trying to establish a new link between these two positions. On the one hand, we have the loss of legitimized uniformity; this promotes cultures that were oppressed the past to come forward. On the other, with the fast pace of change today, we conform our missions and values to the more current purposes of globalization. Educational institutions do not have the capacity to change quickly; we need time to think, to become integrated, and to inform students.

We are working on academic exchanges and we are aware that these are an important tool in academic programs. We haven't had a lot of contacts or influences. We are very small, but we are very willing to participate.

Public Education, Federal Government **Eugenio Cetina-Vadillo, Director General de Educación Superior**

There are 1,500 private and public universities throughout Mexico, with 2.2 million students. In Mexico 50 years ago there were about 30,000 students. During those years, the total population has multiplied by four but the higher education enrollment has multiplied by 70. So this is a really remarkable effort that our country has made with spectacular results. But as spectacular as it is, it is not enough. Only 21.2 percent of those between the ages of 21 and 23 attend a university, about half of what we think it should be. In 1990, the rate was only 12.2 percent, so there has been a large increase.

We face several challenges. Eighty percent of undergraduates are concentrated in medicine, accounting, administration and law. There are only three or four majors that are available to most students. In addition, our post graduate offerings are totally insufficient, especially in sciences. That means we have not developed a solid base of a scientific community that could help with the development of the country.

There is also the issue of the quality of teachers. We have 210,000 teachers in higher education and the majority teach only part time. Only 26 percent have master's degrees and an even smaller 6 percent have doctorates. This leads to the difficult challenge of having to improve higher education by improving the quality of the full-time teachers. Today we have 7,000 scholarships that allow full-time teachers to continue their studies here and abroad.

We also have problems with access, which is profoundly unequal. Low-income families, those from rural areas, marginal urban areas and indigenous populations have little access to higher education. Only 11 percent of those from marginal areas and 3 percent from rural areas have access. For indigenous populations, it is practically nil. We must become inclusive in our higher education offerings. We must take these groups of people into account and open new higher education forums where these people can have access, through technology or other means.

Another area is that our universities in Mexico focus their activities on handing knowledge down. They sometimes completely forget they also must generate knowledge through research. We must improve our coverage, providing more cohesion and coherence in our coverage of academic areas. It is in our higher education institutions that we must establish resources necessary to improve research.

Our vision for education is that by 2006 we will have 2.8 million students and 28 percent of the 19 through 23 year olds. This will require a huge effort in budget and human resources by both the schools and the government. We want to triple the post-graduate

Conclusion

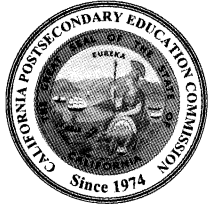
students, bringing them to 150,000. And we want to triple attendance by those with little access, including the indigenous population. One of our most pressing problems is students from low-income backgrounds. We are forming a national scholarship program that will benefit at least 300,000 students so that no student with academic ability will miss out on higher education solely for economic reasons. We want to increase the number of students that obtain a degree and go through the exit exams, as well as the number who receive doctorates. And we want to increase the quality of teachers. To do all of this, we need to greatly increase basic infrastructure: not just classrooms, but laboratories, computer rooms, libraries, etc.

By providing a forum to examine border issues, the California Postsecondary Education Commission uncovered not only unmet educational challenges but also a strong hunger for collaborative approaches that will address those challenges both in the Imperial Valley and across the California-Mexico border. The specifics that the Commission heard in Calexico and Mexicali may have differed but in broad perspective many issues are shared in common:

- In both border areas, there is a concern about resources and the investment required to expand higher education opportunities to a larger and growing number of people.
- The quality of education, both in breadth of offerings and in program delivery, is an issue that education officials are eager to address.
- There is an intense interest in cross-border projects that will fill the gaps that students face in their own countries: bilingual education for students pursuing teaching careers in the United States and science, teacher education and post-graduate studies for students in Mexico.

Many of the issues raised during the two days of hearings were not purely in the arena of higher education — problems with health care, economics, social equity. But all are connected in the vision that higher education can provide solutions and opportunities to address the issues. The Commission views the hearings as the starting point of a dialogue that should continue and over time provide new, strong linkages to improve educational opportunities on both sides of the border.

California Postsecondary Education Commission



A citizen board established in 1974 by the Legislature and Governor to provide them with independent, non-partisan policy analysis and recommendations about California education beyond the high school and to coordinate the efforts of California's colleges and universities in order "to assure the effective utilization of public postsecondary education resources, thereby eliminating waste and unnecessary duplication, and to promote diversity, innovation, and responsiveness to student and societal needs."

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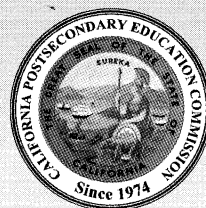
Odessa Johnson, Modesto

*Terms are for six years and expire in December of the year noted in parenthesis.

**Terms are for two years and expire in December of the year noted in parenthesis.

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